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Bait and Shoot

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Presentation by Jim Snider*

One thing that if you look at the agenda, it basically says I'm here to talk about bait and shoot, and it will be part of my presentation, but first of all I don't think I could talk about bait and shoot for an hour. We can argue about bait and shoot for an hour, but I don't think we can talk about it for that long. What I'm going to do is broaden that just a little bit to get a much clearer perspective on why you have, or perceive to have, a deer problem in Amherst, and then look at some of the trends we have observed in the last few years. By the time I get through my presentation you'll probably sick of looking at abandoned farmhouses, maybe with what you saw and heard, but it comes much closer to home when we're talking about what's going on here in Amherst. We can get started.

One of the things that I've been aware of when talking to people, people calling on the telephone, people commenting in newspapers and so forth, is just the lack of a conservative perspective with what's going on with deer not only in Amherst, but all over our communities here in Erie County. Most people tend to dwell on the present. Obviously, something had to lead up to this time period, and in a lot of this first part of my presentation we'll take a look at some of that.

We'll go right back to colonial times and in the early pioneer years, the economies tended to be agricultural at one time. Most of New York State--at least 80% of the state--was farmed at one time. Certainly this was true in Erie County also. One of the things you see in the lake plain of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario here in Erie County is the fact that it was intensively farmed. A lot of those fields were

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for grains -- oat, wheat were two of the most common crops that were planted.

One of the problems we see -- again, a lot of this lake plain was a very flat area, quite poorly drained in some cases. So in many cases the farmers had trouble with late draining on their fields. The crop was either a short-term crop or one that had to be planted in early fall, that is out there already, is something that they still could produce a crop with. In the last couple years, some of our farmers in Amherst had extreme problems even getting crops planted so they could be harvested in the fall because of wet springs.

One of the things that goes into my presentation is the fact that the deer population (we're also talking about deer management itself), one of the first things that, as I pointed out before, was the very fact that in Western New York basically by about 1860, we had no deer. They had been extirpated by a combination of farming, utilization of venison either for market purposes or for substance for the people living on the property. In the early 1880s, we had new laws that basically prohibited shooting of deer, even though we had no deer to shoot at that time. It was one of our first attempts in the state to basically protect what deer population were left. In Western New York the first deer that really reappeared did so about 1910 in the Southern Tier. Most of our deer basically are direct descendants of population of deer that came from north-central Pennsylvania. That population increased in number and expanded its range into the southern part of our region, Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua -- three counties that border on the Pennsylvania border.

Our first managed deer season that we had here in Western New York was 1928, and it was a season for antlered bucks only. To be truthful, I can't even tell you how many days the season was for because we had a grand harvest in six counties of nine deer. It's not that long time, even in the Southern Tier, that we've had many deer in our system. Back then Cattaraugus County harvested seven deer, Wyoming County had one, and I believe Allegany County had one. So even though deer appeared in Erie and Niagara counties, no deer were taken during that deer season of 1928.

In 1939, the first continuous deer-hunting season was held in our Southern Tier counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua. Every tenth year since then, we've had some type of hunting season there. Erie County saw a deer season in 1941 for the first time. Now we're talking basically about 55 years we've had deer hunting in any part of Erie County. In Niagara County, the first deer season occurred in 1946. So now we're down to basically about 50 years in which Erie County and Niagara County have had hunting seasons.

One of the things that occurred as our deer seasons were opened, and these were basically legislative amendments to our own environmental conservation law to reopen areas to legal hunting, was the green area which includes the Town of Amherst was never legally reopened up to deer hunting. It has led to some of our problems with deer and trying to manage them at this point in time.

What we have done is managed deer through hunting season and anything else in Western New York that surrounding that green area with green area that has never had legal deer hunting season. Basically, this is the only place in New York State other than within municipal boundaries and so forth that has never had a legal hunting season in the mid-late 1900s. So what occurs here does not occur any place else in New York State.

As it was pointed out before, one of the things, and is it doesn't matter whether its the Southern Tier counties or Erie County, the same thing has occurred time after time and is still going on today. Farmland does have a handicap, the hilltop farms because of the erosion and so forth allows for those situations. People abandon those farms. In places such as parks in Erie County, in many cases, when farms were sold people purchased them. A lot of times they were purchased at speculation for future development because there was an urban development going on. So, maybe this is the reason for the farmland abandonment in parts of Amherst. The same process is going on.

Once the farmland has been abandoned for a few years, it becomes that first perfect deer habitat that was discussed before. This is one of the reasons we will get into some of our aerial surveys

and so forth. This is one of the reflections on why we have so many deer in parts of Amherst at this point in time.

When we do aerial surveys, it quickly becomes evident that portions of the town (and I think some people believe that all of Amherst is developed), the northern part of the town is still, quite frankly, quite remote. We have some commercial development along the major highways, a few small subdivisions, but the major portion of northern Amherst is still undeveloped. If you get up in an airplane and start looking, you can see the patterns of abandoned fields, a lot of this area is ditched for getting the water off those fields in the spring time so the farmers could use those fields. A lot of those ditches now, because of lack of maintenance, no longer function. We're seeing a lot of young wetland and swamp beginning to form in these abandoned farmlands. As I said before, we now have a wonderful transformation back to perfect deer habitat.

Another portion of Western New York is down in West Seneca which again is this green area in the slide show. The exact same thing has happened there. Extremely high deer density. As you look, most of their habitat at this point in time is still in the ecological succession with a tremendous amount (50-75%) still being in the shrub stage which is just the perfect habitat for deer. As was pointed out before, deer use those shrubby and wooded areas for cover. In the case of shrub successional stages, there are tremendous amounts of natural food especially in winter time. But they certainly recognize that if there's an agricultural field nearby, we've got some of the best stuff growing there that they can eat.

I think this is probably the first deer damage complaint that I went out on in the Town of Amherst, and it was about deer eating cabbage. This was in the early-mid 1970's. At that point in time, deer were not as much of a problem, deer were not something we talked about much as far as management in the Town of Amherst. One of the problems that deer have is that they like to sample. If deer walked through a field and just ate the whole head of cabbage and then went on to the next one, they probably would eat one head of cabbage and go back for the night because they would be full. They

have democratic tastes for our purposes and one of the things we see whenever we go out on deer damage complaints is many times the animal will take one bite and for some reason decides that's not the cabbage he wants to feed on. He keeps going down the row until he finds the perfect piece. And even there, one bite is too much because he wants the full market value of that particular product, whether it's cabbage or pumpkin or whatever.

They like all the vegetables. We do have some farmers in this particular area who intensively farm to produce vegetables. It's one of the areas where we still have a lot of roadside markets in the summer and most of the produce is produced locally. Cucumbers, beans, corn, pumpkin is the standard target of this scourge of deer and once they like them, they keep coming back to the same growers year after year. Again, it's the one bite that ruins the product. Four or five half eaten pumpkins become basically useless and is left in the field. If you really like that pumpkin, you eat most of that particular vegetable when you're standing there.

At the same time we started receiving complaints on agricultural damage, we also started to get complaints from people with suburban homes. A lot of these people had moved from city areas or other parts of metropolitan New York State and across the country. They bought these suburban homes and for the first time in their life they experienced deer and their damage. It certainly was a new experience and it continued to be a new experience for many people when they moved out to some of our suburban areas. This is a house that is about three blocks from the Great Bahre swamp which is the proposed cite for our contraception project and this is basically what that same property looked like after a few deer visited during the winter time, none during daylight hours however. So in many cases, for us, technical advice is the only thing we can give these people (telling them how to protect their plants, how to fence, how to wrap them, how to use repellants). Quite frankly, in most cases, by the time we get the phone call, except for physical barriers such as fencing, a repellent probably isn't going to work. These deer are keyed into what the problem is. They like the stuff and even with

repellents we seem to get poor results because the problem is already re-occurring.

One of the substations in the northern part of the town is landscaped at one end. The deer decided they like pine trees. The spruce trees that were right next to the pine trees there were basically ignored. As I said before, deer have taste preferences and I think they can tell after one bite whether they like it or not. If they don't like it, they leave and find something new.

One of the concerns that we as a department had, and its very seldom a mistrust either in media or in many of our meetings on deer's impacts on natural vegetation. We had discussions before about protection of a lot of our wild flowers, not only that but we basically alter what kind of forest they're going to have in the future. Again, here's a small green ash that was browsed on year after year is totally deformed, and unless it's probably in an area where there is full sunlight, it will be destroyed because the energy that plant nets over a period of time get to the point where a seedling won't make it. One of the things we would hope as time goes on is really develop a management plan first for the Town of Amherst. The fact that we get beyond the point where we have mature forest there will be another story and at that point deer probably aren't quite so helpful.

One of the things we can also learn as time goes on is this has been a learning process for us in our Department. A lot of this is people like to call and complain. We became more and more aware of what was going on with the deer problem, just with deer/car collisions. It's been one of those things we could pretty well document in this particular town. I think Amherst has a very unique situation where they have a private contractor that picks up most of the dead deer left on the highway. That contractor has kept tremendously accurate records for years, always documented by month. We have been able to come up with some wonderful information from that contractor. We also have the ability to document through what we call a possession tag program the state has where the any individual that hits a deer with a car can get a possession tag and take that animal home and utilize it as venison. It

varies, but in most of New York State only about 20% of the deer hit by vehicles are taken home with possession tags. But the nice thing in Amherst is we have been able to put those two together and pretty well come up with what we felt was a very accurate picture of deer/car collisions. One of things that we have found out just in our research and documentation of problems, in 1986 we detected 161 deer/car collision in this town. By 1993 that number had gone up to 499 deer/car collisions. Which is a little over 300% increase. One the things to be aware of, and the literature and research shows, is that probably 2-4% of all deer/car collisions result in a personal injury. A very small percent of them also incur a mortality of one of the people in one of the vehicles. This was an individual that was a passenger in the vehicle in Amherst that had a deer come through the windshield. Luckily, he's okay, but it just starts to bring out the fact that this is something that is a major concern and an impact on many things.

As we progress to our management in the town, one of the things our department did was work with local legislators to try to introduce an archery season for not just Amherst, but this whole urban area which shows the green area on that one slide. We want to note that although archery may not be a total solution, in some of our urban areas it has become more and more of a management tool that we can use. A good example is Westchester county just north of New York City at this point in time where a fairly liberal bag limit I guess you could say on archery hunting with additional deer management permits and so forth we are now harvesting about 1,500 - 1,600 deer per year in that county by archery alone. That's an improvement from what we had a few years ago. It is a possibility if we can every get it legalized again. What we wanted to do what was modify existing legislation which prohibited deer hunting in suburban areas to allow archery. In 1987 a bill was introduced; and in July 1987 that bill was passed, but unfortunately, at the eleventh or twelfth hours there was an attachment at the end of the bill that basically says local communities could decide whether or not they wanted to have archery in their town. Our state position is basically the state is responsible

for managing wildlife in terms of hunting seasons, trapping seasons, fishing season, whatever, and not at the local municipality. At the same time there was a report from Suffolk County in Long Island with a case where the county basically said they wanted prohibit all trapping in the county. So, we basically had to urge the governor to veto that bill, even though it said what we wanted but little additional flyer amended at the last minute basically took away our ability to even legally manage deer in suburban areas. As a result of that, I was instructed and went on to every town that had a closed, no hunting, area and there are many in this Western New York area. We met with supervisor town supervisors, town boards; discussed the situation in 1978 and seemed to be somewhat in agreement that most of the town could go along with it. In 1989 we basically submitted a proposal modified archery season for this suburban area that excluded a lot of the more urbanized areas but left a lot of the problem areas. There is just never enough support for those things to be voted on. One of things I quickly learned is when ever you're dealing with legislation, there are many levels of government involved and you have many levels of politicians -- whether it's an election year and so forth. Even though people will admit behind the scenes that, yes, there is a problem and, yes, this would help to solve it, it comes to the issue of an election coming up that particular fall, many times people just refused to move things and vote on it because of that. It's not just suburban deer coming up -- it happens to many other issues. One of the big frustrations we have at this point in time immunocontraception and some of those new concepts were really not even in existence as far as your concerned in Amherst and Erie County. It was all the stonewalling we could do to try to manage the deer population in the northern parts of Amherst.

We have begun to document what's going on biologically in the town. It's not as intense certainly as some of the studies in our national parks where you have a staff that is doing nothing but research. But one of the things we have done in the past few years when we had a bad winter is go out and early spring and try to document every casualty of starvation in some of these areas that are

close to hunting. In 1994 in Amherst we did document some fawns being starved. There wasn't a lot but it was certainly just one point showing the high concentrations in the small areas and what we tend to see in bad winters is that deer concentrate, they become very localized in their movement patterns and even though half a mile away there may be adequate food for them, they kind of get locked into these small concentration areas. In many cases, the fawns are going to be the first ones that will starve. What we document back here in Amherst is basically fawns only starve.

Just looking quickly at one of the quickest ways we get an idea of the health of the animal just laying there dead and many times we break open the femur in the hind leg and look at the bone marrow. It looks like almost a white candle, silk, and has a lot of fat content to it. The animal obviously died, but it certainly didn't die of starvation. In these individuals and in other places where we documented starvation, we basically break open that same bone and all of a sudden there's no fat content left even inside the bone marrow. Again, in Western New York most of the deer we find dead 90% are fawns that are 6-8 months in age.

We knew that we should try to document more than just deer/car collisions and pure damage complaints. So, for some unknown reason we decided we would try an aerial survey which since then has pointed out a lot of information but has caused us physical discomfort for myself and the other technicians that fly with me. We tend to wait till it's about 30 mile per hour winds before trying to fly a survey and we bounce around in a high-wing Cessna. There are probably more accurate ways of doing aerial surveys – you can do a statistical grid network from helicopters. We kind of did this by the seat of our pants with limited resources as far as money is involved. We jumped in an airplane and basically circled the habitats, the major ones where we felt there were deer and did a count. We've always said don't say that it's 100% accurate, but long-term it's given us a pretty good trend on what's going on in the deer population. In 1986 we did our first aerial survey in the Town of Amherst; we counted 265 deer. By 1994 that number crawled up to 1,116 which is

about 120% increase. Again, that we say that 120% increase of population certainly isn't accurate, but it certainly points out that at the same time our deer/car collisions went up about 300%, our aerial survey showed a population that looked like it was going up about 400%.

We continued to do this. We flew this about three weeks ago. One of the problems we had this winter was snow, and for awhile it didn't like we were going to get a flight. We were basically doing under complete snow conditions to pick out deer and this year when we did our survey we counted 733. So, we have dropped probably about 350 deer from our high numbers in 1994. One of the points that -- and I don't know how well you can see some of these deer, but this is basically what we're looking at when were flying -- it becomes extremely physically eye straining before you get done because you're flying at an elevation of 950 -1,100 feet looking straight down trying to count every deer you can find. Our best counts by far are in the brushy areas in early successional stages. One of the interesting things is most of our deer not only feed here but they also bed down in those same brushy areas. It's their preferred habitat by far. In some of the areas in the Great Bahre swamp, basically, we're dealing with all mature forests. The deer, at that point and time, do not have a choice. They have to live in that mature forest. In there we can find deer no place else because there are subdivisions completely surrounding that particular habitat.

One of the things that we certainly found is people that are opposed to some of the management techniques, we try to bring forward to the towns who've criticized our aerial survey. One of the things we have always commented on is that it's not 100% accurate, and they immediately jump on that and say well you're making up numbers and so forth. But I think long- term, for our purposes we deal with, it certainly indicated trends in what's going on. As you get into more mature forest, it becomes more difficult if you've got any type of conifer cover it's almost impossible to count deer underneath those conifer trees. In areas looking like this and you're a little too high in elevation and you don't see anything you go home and say

that it was a frustrating day. One of our problems is that each year it may be a different pilot. We've had extremely busy kinds of year, and a couple cases we actually canceled our flight part way through because he was concerned about flying too low against FAA regulations and we truthfully a survey that is showing about half the number of deer that were actually out there. So we canceled our flight.

Couple things, that hopefully show up in the back, we probably got the most unique urban deer information in New York State. Part of that is because of the contractor collected information and kept it and had given it to the town and given it to us. That, combined with those possession tags come up with a good number of deer/car collision for us. The other thing that we had is this is probably the only urban area that I'm aware of that we've almost flown annually for the last 10 or 12 years and so we've got a pretty good background on what's going on, and as I've said before, 1993 and 1994 were the peak years we had deer/car collisions and a number of deer seen in our aerial survey.

We can now get to, I guess what the original intent of my presentation was, the Amherst bait-and-shoot and quite frankly, it's hard for me to break out what's in the impact of the bait and shoot program by the town from the other part of our deer damage permit program which is issuance to individual land owners of deer damage permits. So, really the results that will show in a minute are a combination of those two types of permits that have been issued. Basically, the only difference is instead of individual getting a landowner permit to shoot 5 deer or 10 deer where we documented agricultural damage. The town itself applied for a deer damage permit, their main concerns were public safety in deer/car collisions and certainly there was concern for relief for the agricultural interests and some for homeowners who had a lot of damage to shrubs, flowers and so forth. We basically had three years since the town applied for and got a deer damage permit. Unfortunately, I think maybe why deer damage permit management involves becomes bait and shoot permit but in New York State it's legal to issue a permit (to a town) just like

you would for an individual. In 1995, 134 deer were taken on this (January, February, March 1995). In 1996 a total of 74 deer were taken on this permit. In 1997 a permit was issued, and the day after the permit was issued, a court injunction temporarily halted the use of this permit and finally the judges' decision was that the town because of their State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) had put in that their projection was that they wanted to reduce deer population by 70% over three years. The judge felt that before the town could proceed with that type of an operation under the deer damage permit, they needed to do a complete environmental impact statement. At this point in time, the town has not done that. There has been no challenge of that court decision that occurred in March 1997. So, legally, at this point in time, the town can't go out tomorrow with a permit from us and shoot deer but they're basically still under court order to do that impact statement before they can consider bait and shoot again.

So what's happening? One of the things that occurred at the same time the town was deciding on whether they wanted to shoot deer and how to solve the problem, and one of the main factors that changed that, was a different person was elected to be town supervisor and the individual basically got to the point of saying we've got a major problem with too many deer, we have to do something about it. And more or less, aggressively went forward with the proposal on how to get rid of deer. One of our recommendations was to shoot the deer under the bait and shoot permit. Between the year 1994 and 1996 there became intensive use of deer damage permits of individual land owners which is town supported and the use of the bait and shoot permit. Six hundred twenty-five deer were removed from the town in three years. As a result of that, one thing had occurred, and that's by far the highest number of deer removed by deer damage permits in the town and has since then stopped and gone back down. The total number of deer observed on our aerial surveys dropped from 1,100 to about 750 in the last two years. The number of deer/car collisions has dropped from 499 in 1993 down to 313 last year in the summer of 1997,

which is a drop of about 186 deer/car collisions. Certainly, not all of this reduction is based on those two deer damage permits, but it certainly is a major factor that we feel is contributed to a reduction of deer population. The one thing that we should point out is that all these permits have been basically used in the northern part of town. Most of the town of Amherst there has been no reduction of deer by use of any type of deer damage permit over the last 10 years.

One of the things I found interesting is one of the individuals I deal with from the town had gotten a price quote from Carruba Collision, which is a major auto repair place within the town. His estimate of the average costs to repair a car in 1996 and 1997 on a deer/car collision was about \$1,700. So, if you look at that reduction in number of deer/car collisions by 186 over a period of about four years you probably reduced the amount of economic loss in looking at deer/car collisions of over \$300,000. I think most of that can be attributed to the use of bait and shoot permits and deer damage permits.

So, another interesting thing we were able to do is we finally got a large scale taking and harvesting a deer was to look at some of the information biologically. One of the things that is projected is how many fawns are being produced by deer and its one of our only chances to really document what is going on in the Town of Amherst. What we thought was happening and really what's been produced from this selection of deer basically in 1995 when we had the largest part of deer on deer damage permits is we still have extremely healthy deer in general in the town of Amherst. I think it goes right back to still some agricultural going on. Certainly, an awful lot of that early successional shrub stage is still producing a tremendous amount of food for these deer. Deer of 2 1/2 years and older, females that we've looked at their embryos averaged 1.8 fawns for adult doe. Which is as good as any of our historical information for Central and Western New York. It was heard before basically every adult deer in the Town of Amherst that breeds produces about two fawns each year. Car mortality is a major mortality factor on deer in this town and still continues to be the major mortality factor. One of the things that we

also looked at was what was the age structure of these deer. Our deer damage permit and also the bait and shoot permit were restricted to antlers-only deer. Obviously, in the middle of winter antlered bucks many had shed their antlers so some of those were taken into harvest but if you look at the percent of deer by ages starting at fawn, one of the things that is a little interesting to me and surprising was how young the deer population was in 1995 was and basically at that time 80% of our deer were at the 3 1/2 years or less age category. Two things were happening, obviously, at that time we had increase in population and expanding young healthy deer population. Certainly, another thing was controlling those older ages were not surviving to live that long mainly because of deer/car collisions. This is really the first year we had a major harvest of deer on deer damage permits. So it looks like we had previous mortality from some type of hunting or deer damage permit that would lead up to this information. We have very few older deer. Interestingly enough, we looked at areas where we have hunting and we looked at the harvest and the age structure on female deer, it's almost exactly the same. Some of our deer I just looked at this week, last fall the percent of female of 3 1/2 years and younger were 88% vs. 80% found in Amherst. Really not much difference in the number of deer in the young categories as older. We have one other area not too far away, Monroe County, where bait and shoot and basically that is all that going for mortality on deer damage permits is the bait and shoot in the Town of Irondequoit. I think they have the same type of concerns that evolved in Amherst with more deer/car collisions, more property problems, more people with deer damage complaints, limited amounts of agriculture there for some that live in the town. And so the town did institute the bait and shoot in the town. Again, one of things both in Amherst and Irondequoit bait and shoot programs are restricted to a small portion of the town so it wasn't like these programs impacted on deer throughout the town. It just points out that even with bait and shoot program or deer damage permit program it only involved a third of the town. You can't even compare the drastic reduction of deer/car collision. I know Irondequoit hasn't had as many aerial surveys Dr. Porter who is going

to be talking next has done at least one with a helicopter probably giving us better information on deer density in that town. But for us, and for us being New York State DEC, it's one of the few ways we have of managing deer at this point in time. Legal hunting is now starting to come back into the Town of Irondequoit with some limited bow hunting. We have some of it in this part of Erie County. So at this point in time, if we look at our bag of management tools that help reduce deer/car collision, deer damages in Amherst, we are looking at deer damage permits and nothing else. It certainly isn't as effective as it could be with others tools. As time goes on, perhaps immunocontraception will be one of those additional tools that we can mix in with it. There is still potential for the Town of Amherst to have some type of a limited controlled archery season. But at this point in time we only have one management technique and that's the deer damage permit.

A look to the future and a look to the back. Basically, deer damage permits and bait and shoot work. And if I depended on your outlook, we feel it has helped reduce the number of deer/collisions, we feel it has helped to reduce the actual number of deer in the town by about 30-35%. One of the pluses that we observed and were able to get out of the actual deer damage permits in 1993-94 or 1994-95 especially with most of deer being taken to a processor with venison then going to the food bank. Between the fall 1994 and spring 1995 over 300 deer were taken in on each permit that were processed and went to the food bank. In that particular time period food bank ended up with only 10,000 lbs. of venison. That venison basically goes in about 1/4 lb. servings as far as protein source for meals. So, truthfully it denotes for that time period we produced enough protein for 40,000 meals at the food bank. So we thought that was extremely good utilization of a resource that was probably at too high a level at that point in time.

We, obviously, are aware of the emotional aspects of any type of killing in the open areas and it's one of those things that is extremely difficult to deal with because everybody becomes an expert on what they feel should be the end result for management and non-

management of deer. It probably was struck home to me as closely as anything I could think of by one of the people who works in our office. He lives in Amherst he has hunted in the past but does not hunt now. But his house was near one of the bait and shoot sites and after one of the evenings when the police were out (and these were police on the Amherst town permit) utilizing these permits, he came back to the office and said how upset his wife was because she heard gun shots. For people who grew up in rural areas, gun shots are almost a way of life and it's not that people are out shooting each other, but people shoot guns a lot in rural areas. They shoot them at targets, they shoot them prior to hunting season for getting ready for the hunting season, they shoot them during the hunting season, the deer, whatever is a legal target. People shoot woodchuck and so forth that cause damage problems. Gunshots are almost a way of life and to think that in this case. Probably this was the first time this woman ever heard a gunshot from inside her house. It obviously is an extremely emotional problem. It certainly is something that is real--people can hear a gunshot and think it's in your backyard and really it's 300 or 400 yards away. But it's still a real concern and that's one of the things that we have to deal with in suburban areas. Next year Amherst police can use the bait and shoot permit. They have silencers on their rifles. It really eliminated one of the major types of the emotional conflicts we had as far as the sound aspect of it. It still didn't eliminate the aspect of people just having to deal with the killing of deer. That's all I really have at this point in time.